
Chapter 2

SCOPE

The scope of the *Lower Columbia Steelhead Conservation Initiative* (LCSCI), includes Washington steelhead stocks not only in the Lower Columbia River ESU, but steelhead stocks in that portion of the Southwest Washington ESU in the Columbia River as well (Figure 1). The Southwest Washington steelhead ESU was not proposed for listing by NMFS under the ESA. However, it is included in the LCSCI because the status and risks faced by wild steelhead stocks in this portion of the Southwest Washington ESU and the Lower Columbia ESU are similar. Thus, conservation and restoration efforts in the LCSCI area will form a comprehensive, coordinated, and timely protection and rebuilding framework for steelhead.

As mentioned earlier in this draft the status of chum and chinook salmon, and sea-run cutthroat trout in the lower Columbia River area is poor. Chum and chinook salmon in the lower Columbia were proposed for listing as **“threatened” by the NMFS on February 26, 1998**. Analyses by WDFW suggest that the status of sea-run cutthroat trout is also poor and they may be proposed for listing by NMFS under the ESA in the lower Columbia in the near future. Thus a comprehensive regional conservation strategy for all species of concern is needed to not only support restoration of wild steelhead, but also to foster improved watershed health and improved stock status for multiple species.

The LCSCI includes Washington’s wild steelhead stocks in the Lower Columbia River ESU and the Columbia River portion of the Southwest Washington ESU. Specifically, the LCSCI includes subbasins from the mouth of the Columbia River up to and including the Wind River (Figure 1). In Oregon, subbasins in the Lower Columbia River ESU include the lower Willamette River (except for the upper Willamette) up to the Hood River, inclusive. Oregon's Columbia River portion of the Southwest Washington ESU includes populations below the Willamette down to the mouth of the Columbia River.

In Washington, the Lower Columbia steelhead ESU contains five major drainages and numerous smaller ones, representing 12 wild winter steelhead stocks and five wild summer steelhead stocks. This ESU is comprised of four Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIAs): 26 (Cowlitz), 27 (Lewis-Kalama), 28 (Salmon-Washougal), and 29 (Wind-White Salmon, Wind River portion only). The Columbia River portion of the Southwest Washington ESU contains six drainages, and six wild winter-run stocks. It is represented by WRIA 25 (Grays-Elochoman).

Again, although the emphasis of the LCSCI is on steelhead, the status of wild stocks of other lower Columbia River salmonids including chum and chinook salmon, and coastal cutthroat and bull trout is also of key concern. Issues associated with these species will be addressed in more detail in subsequent drafts of the Initiative, once NMFS findings have been disclosed and reviewed. Chum salmon exist in various locations in the LCSCI area. Key wild chum stocks of concern exist in the Grays River (WRIA 25), and further up the Columbia in small populations in Hardy and Hamilton creeks (WRIA 29). The Lewis

River (WRIA 27) affords a key stronghold for wild chinook in the lower Columbia area. Sea-run cutthroat exist in virtually all portions of the LCSCI area. As stated previously, the framework afforded by the LCSCI for steelhead will also provide a strong foundation upon which to add value from coordinated protection and restoration strategies for these other species.

Figure 1. Map of Southwest Washington showing the Lower Columbia Steelhead Conservation Initiative geographic boundary.